



DOGS TRUST VETERINARY SUPPORT FUND

Terms and Conditions

v .0 – Effective from 1 February 2023

1. **What is the VSF?**

The Veterinary Support Fund (“**VSF**”) is a programme run by Dogs Trust which part funds the cost of veterinary bills in order to facilitate the adoption of dogs at Dogs Trust’s rehoming centres that require ongoing treatment for one or more documented pre-existing condition(s).

The VSF is funded entirely by charitable donations made to Dogs Trust and it is not an insurance policy.

You remain responsible to your Veterinary Practice for payment of bills relating to your dog.

This means that you are responsible for:

1. Making any claims to Dogs Trust under the VSF, including liaising with your Veterinary Practice to make any claims on your behalf.
2. Paying for those aspects which are not funded by Dogs Trust under these Terms and Conditions.

Please note that by continuing to use the VSF you are confirming your agreement to these Terms and Conditions.

All dogs adopted from Dogs Trust are eligible for 4 weeks of free insurance cover with Petplan. Please speak with your Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre for more information in relation to this. Dogs Trust suggests that all Adopters consider whether or not an insurance policy would be appropriate to provide financial assistance for veterinary treatment not funded under the VSF. Please note that Dogs Trust is not able to recommend or offer you any advice on insurance products.

2. **Key Words**

In these Terms and Conditions we use the following words:

- **Adopter / You** – The person(s) named on the VSF Certificate. The VSF Certificate is not transferrable.
- **Dogs Trust / We** – The VSF is both managed by and funded through Dogs Trust, a charity registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 227523) and in Scotland (registered charity number SCO37843) with its registered office at 17 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7RQ and its sole trustee, Dogs Trust Trustee Limited (Company Number 08996564), enters into contracts on behalf of Dogs Trust.
- **Dogs Trust Pharmacy** – Dogs Trust’s central pharmacy, managed by the Dogs Trust team.
- **End Date** – For Temporary VSF Funding only, the date when funding ends (as set out in the VSF Certificate).
- **Lifetime Financial Limit** – The maximum funding Dogs Trust will provide under the VSF, over the lifetime of your dog.
- **Start Date** – The date when your dog becomes eligible to receive funding, as stated on the VSF Certificate.
- **Temporary VSF Funding** – In some circumstances, VSF funding may only be temporary and where this is the case, the End Date will be set out in your VSF Certificate.
- **Terms and Conditions** – These terms and conditions.
- **Veterinary Practice** – Your veterinary practice or veterinary referral team.

Dogs Trust

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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Registered Charity Numbers: 227523 & SC037843

- **VSF** – The Veterinary Support Fund.
- **VSF Certificate** – The certificate which confirms VSF funding for your dog.
- **VSF Funded Condition(s)** – Those condition(s) listed on the VSF Certificate issued to you by Dogs Trust. Treatments, medications and/or procedures will only be funded where they relate to these listed conditions.

3. Changes to the VSF Terms and Conditions

These Terms and Conditions supersede any and all previous terms and conditions for the VSF. Dogs Trust reserves the right to further amend these terms and conditions from time to time, upon giving you reasonable notice of any changes.

Dogs Trust relies on charitable donations in order to fund the VSF. Whilst we will try to keep Dogs Trust's contribution towards the VSF funded veterinary fees as set out in these Terms and Conditions, this may not always be possible and regrettably the amount funded by Dogs Trust may change from time to time, although we will always notify you of any such changes in advance.

4. How does the VSF Funding work?

General

Where Dogs Trust has agreed to part fund your dog's veterinary bills under the VSF, you will be issued with a **VSF Certificate** and **claim form**. Please keep these safe - you will need to bring a copy of your VSF Certificate and claim form with you every time you visit your Veterinary Practice.

VSF funding is only valid for:

- the Adopter named on the VSF Certificate;
- the dog identified on the VSF Certificate; and
- the **VSF Funded Conditions** listed on the VSF Certificate. Treatments, medications and/or procedures unrelated to the VSF Funded Conditions will not be funded by Dogs Trust.

Each dog funded under the VSF is given a **Lifetime Financial Limit**, which is the amount set out on the VSF Certificate.

Funding under the VSF will only be made in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, including those specific restrictions set out in **Section 6**.

Veterinary Practices

Dogs Trust agrees to contribute 50% towards the Veterinary Practice bills for your dog's VSF Funded Condition(s) noted on their VSF Certificate, subject at all times to the Lifetime Financial Limit and other restrictions set out in these Terms and Conditions. Each amount paid by Dogs Trust will be deducted from your dog's remaining Lifetime Financial Limit.

We recommend that you please seek advance approval from Dogs Trust's VSF Team for any referral or expensive novel procedures, to check whether Dogs Trust will be able to part fund these. You can contact the Dogs Trust VSF Team using the details listed at the end of these Terms and Conditions.

Please note that you must:

- a) Make any claims to Dogs Trust under the VSF, including liaising with your Veterinary Practice to make any claims on your behalf. Your Veterinary Practice will (at their discretion) require you to either:
 - pay their veterinary fees in full and you claim the applicable contribution back from Dogs Trust; or
 - pay the remaining balance of their veterinary fees and the Veterinary Practice will claim the applicable contribution directly from Dogs Trust, on your behalf.
- b) Pay directly to your Veterinary Practice the applicable veterinary fees in relation to your dog's VSF Funded Condition(s) until your dog's Lifetime Financial Limit is reached, after which time you must pay your dog's veterinary fees in full.
- c) Monitor the remaining balance of your dog's Lifetime Financial Limit.
- d) Help your Veterinary practice follow the procedure set out in **Section 7** of these Terms and Conditions.
- e) Pay directly to your Veterinary Practice any other fees not funded by Dogs Trust under these Terms and Conditions.

If you or your Veterinary Practice make a claim under the VSF, but your dog is near or has already reached their Lifetime Financial Limit:

- **No remaining balance** – If your dog has already reached their Lifetime Financial Limit, we will contact you and your Veterinary Practice to advise that the veterinary fees claimed cannot be funded by Dogs Trust. You will be responsible for paying for these veterinary fees in full.
- **Low remaining balance** – If your dog has some amount remaining of their Lifetime Financial Limit, but this is not enough to cover the veterinary fees claimed for, Dogs Trust will only provide funding up to the Lifetime Financial Limit. You will be responsible for paying for the remaining veterinary fees in full.

Dogs Trust Pharmacy

Dogs Trust agrees to pay 100% of the cost of your dog's medication which is dispensed by the Dogs Trust Pharmacy, subject at all times to the Lifetime Financial Limit and other restrictions set out in these Terms and Conditions. The full cost of each medication dispensed by Dogs Trust will be deducted from your dog's remaining Lifetime Financial Limit. We will confirm to you in writing the amount deducted at the time your prescription is dispensed, so that you can monitor the remaining balance of your dog's Lifetime Financial Limit.

If your Veterinary Practice sends us a prescription but your dog is near or has already reached their Lifetime Financial Limit:

- **No remaining balance** – If your dog has already reached their Lifetime Financial Limit, we will contact you and your Veterinary Practice to advise that the prescription cannot be fulfilled by the Dogs Trust Pharmacy or funded by Dogs Trust. You will need to arrange for the prescription to be fulfilled by your Veterinary Practice and you will be responsible for paying for this in full.
- **Low remaining balance** – If your dog has some amount remaining of their Lifetime Financial Limit, but this is not enough to cover the requested prescription in full, the Dogs Trust Pharmacy will either fulfil the prescription in full or dispense a smaller quantity of the medication than requested, as decided by Dogs Trust in its sole discretion. Where a smaller quantity of medication is dispensed than that requested, you will need to arrange for the remaining medication via your Veterinary Practice and you will be responsible for paying for this in full.

Any **long-term medication** which is prescribed by your Veterinary Practice must be supplied by the Dogs Trust Pharmacy, unless it:

- Costs £25 or less per prescribed amount;
- Requires refrigeration;
- Is an injectable medication

Medications obtained directly from your Veterinary Practice which could have been sourced from the Dogs Trust Pharmacy will not be funded by Dogs Trust.

Please note that there is on average a 2 week turnaround time from your Veterinary Practice sending your dog's prescription to the Dogs Trust Pharmacy, to the medication(s) arriving at your postal address. Turnaround times may be longer around busy periods, such as the Christmas holidays. You should plan any requests for long-term medication accordingly.

Should your Veterinary Practice need you to issue an interim prescription for long-term medication to cover the Dogs Trust Pharmacy's turnaround period, you must pay your Veterinary Practice for this prescription in full and the costs cannot be claimed back from Dogs Trust.

If you do not receive your prescription from the Dogs Trust Pharmacy within 2 weeks of your Veterinary Practice issuing the prescription, please notify us to allow us to look into this and advise further.

To ensure that we can properly administer the VSF, you must notify Dogs Trust of any change in circumstance, such as a change of your address or other contact details, a change of your primary care Veterinary Practice or the death of your dog, as soon as possible.

5. How long is my dog eligible for VSF Funding?

Your dog is eligible for funding under the VSF from the **Start Date** until the **Lifetime Financial Limit** is reached (both as stated on your dog's VSF Certificate).

We will send you statements at least once a year which will confirm the amounts which have been funded by Dogs Trust under the VSF and your dog's remaining Lifetime Financial Limit. We will also make reasonable endeavours to notify both you and the primary care Veterinary Practice we have on record for you in writing when your dog has £250 or less remaining of their Lifetime Financial Limit.

Please note that it is your responsibility to monitor and keep your own record of your dog's remaining Lifetime Financial Limit. You can contact Dogs Trust to request an update on your dog's remaining Lifetime Financial Limit, at any time.

If your dog has **Temporary VSF Funding**, their VSF funding will cease on the **End Date** noted on their VSF Certificate, or otherwise on the date they reach their **Lifetime Financial Limit** (if earlier).

If your dog's Temporary VSF Funding is approaching its End Date and you would like to discuss your dog's options going forward, please contact the VSF team with details of your dog's medical history.

6. Specific Restrictions

Funding under the VSF will only be made in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, including the following restrictions, unless specifically stated otherwise on your VSF Certificate:

- a) **Not transferrable** – VSF funding is only valid for the Adopter and the dog identified on the VSF Certificate.
- b) **UK only** – VSF funding is only available whilst your dog is residing in and being treated in the UK.
- c) **Prescription Only Medicine** – Dogs Trust will only fund medication which is classified as Prescription Only Medicine (POM-V or POM). Your Veterinary Practice will be able to clarify whether or not this applies to any medication they prescribe for your dog.
- d) **Exclusions** – Dogs Trust will not fund the following:
 - Prescription food.
 - Supplements.
 - CT and/or MRI scans.
 - Chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy.
 - House visits.
 - Treatment of accidental ingestion.
 - Treatment of traumatic injuries (including but not limited to car accidents).
 - Routine preventative health care (including but not limited to vaccinations, flea treatments and worming treatments).
 - Costs associated with euthanasia and/or cremation.
 - Any alternative therapy (including but not limited to acupuncture, homeopathic medicine, and laser therapy).
 - Any insurance policy excess.
 - Treatment for VSF Funded Conditions which have been exacerbated by the dog becoming overweight. Dogs Trust will use its discretion to decide whether to fund treatment in these circumstances.
 - Veterinary Practice bills or medication from the Dogs Trust Pharmacy once your dog's Lifetime Financial Limit has been reached.
 - Treatments, medications and/or procedures unrelated to the VSF Funded Conditions.
- e) **All decisions on funding take account of your dog's welfare and long-term prognosis. There may be further restrictions on what is funded based on this.**
- f) **All funding under the VSF remains subject to Dogs Trust's discretion.**

7. Procedure for Veterinary Practices

We are very grateful to those Veterinary Practices that accept dogs on to the VSF. Please note that **you remain responsible for the payment of veterinary bills relating to your dog.**

This means that you are responsible for liaising with your Veterinary Practice to make any claims to Dogs Trust on your behalf.

To assist Dogs Trust in administering the VSF (including efficient part payment of invoices under the VSF) we ask your Veterinary Practices to please follow these procedures:

a) **Emergencies**

- Arrange for any emergency treatment required. If the treatment is eligible for part funding under the VSF, we may ask you to certify that this was a true emergency.

b) **Prescription Only Medicine**

- Confirm to the Adopter whether or not any medication required by their dog is classified as Prescription Only Medicine (POM-V or POM). The VSF can only fund those medications which are classified as Prescription Only Medicine (POM-V or POM). Any other medication must be wholly funded by the Adopter.
- Prescribe the generic medication name where possible to allow Dogs Trust to save money on branded medication, however we do understand that in some instances the brand may be relevant to the medication being prescribed.

c) **Send prescriptions to the Dogs Trust Pharmacy**

- Request a prescription pad from Dogs Trust for use with the Dogs Trust Pharmacy. This is free of charge and can be requested from Dogs Trust at any time. Dogs Trust Pharmacy prescription forms are also available to print from our website, here: <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/vsf>. The Dogs Trust Pharmacy will only dispense medications prescribed using these forms of prescription.
- Send prescriptions for long-term medication to the Dogs Trust Pharmacy (save for those exceptions set out in **Section 4** of these Terms and Conditions). Those prescriptions which do not need to be sent to the Dogs Trust Pharmacy may be dispensed by the Veterinary Practice and a claim form sent directly to Dogs Trust, for part funding in accordance with these Terms and Conditions.
- Submit prescriptions to the Dogs Trust Pharmacy via the Freepost address on the back of the prescription, or by email to pharmacy@dogstrust.org.uk.

d) **Collect payments from the Adopter (where making a claim on Adopter's behalf)**

- Check the VSF Certificate and ask the Adopter to confirm that they have sufficient remaining balance of their dog's Lifetime Financial Limit to allow Dogs Trust to provide funding.
- Collect from Adopters the 50% of their Veterinary Practice bills not funded by Dogs Trust under the VSF. Adopters are responsible for monitoring the remaining balance of their dog's Lifetime Financial Limit and making up any shortfall not funded by Dogs Trust under the VSF. We will make reasonable endeavours to notify both the Adopter and the primary care Veterinary Practice we have on record for them in writing when that Adopter's dog has £250 or less remaining of their Lifetime Financial Limit.
- Payments made by Adopters must be shown as a deduction on an itemised invoice submitted to Dogs Trust for the remaining amount. If no Adopter payment is clearly marked as deducted on the invoice, the Dogs Trust VSF team will automatically deduct this from the invoice.
- Collect payments from the Adopter and/or their insurance company for any conditions unrelated to the VSF Funded Conditions, or otherwise excluded from funding under the VSF by these Terms and Conditions.
- Medications dispensed by Veterinary Practices which could have been sourced from the Dogs Trust Pharmacy will not be funded by Dogs Trust and Adopters must pay for these prescriptions in full.

e) **Send veterinary claim forms to Dogs Trust (where making a claim on Adopter's behalf)**

- Complete a veterinary claim form (photocopies are acceptable) and send to Dogs Trust along with an itemised invoice and medical history for each VSF dog. Payment of invoices may be delayed or returned unpaid if no claim form has been submitted.
- Submit all veterinary claim forms and invoices to Dogs Trust's Finance department at ap@dogstrust.org.uk. Invoices must be submitted within 6 months of the treatment occurring.
- Allow 30 days for an invoice to be processed once it has been received by Dogs Trust's Finance department.
- Contact Dogs Trust's Finance department directly via ap@dogstrust.org.uk to discuss any invoice or payment queries.

8. **Privacy**

For over 50 years, we've promised never to put down a healthy dog. We keep our promises, and that includes treating your personal information with care and respecting your privacy. Dogs Trust processes personal information in accordance with the Privacy Policy set out on our website here: www.dogstrust.org.uk/privacy.

We will keep the information you have shared with us safe. Please note that we do share your information within the Dogs Trust Group, currently Dogs Trust Promotions Limited, Dogs Trust Limited (Ireland) and Dogs Trust Worldwide. Dogs Trust may also use third party organisations to help deliver services (such as sending letters or emails) on our behalf.

We will use your information to enable the administration of the Veterinary Support Fund for your dog. This includes contacting you and your Veterinary Practice(s) as needed in order to administer the Veterinary Support Fund. For details of what administering the Veterinary Support Fund involves, please refer to the full Veterinary Support Fund Terms and Conditions. Our legal basis for processing your personal information in this way is performance of a contract and Legitimate Interest.

We won't contact you for any purpose other than in relation to the Veterinary Support Fund, unless you already receive other types of communications from Dogs Trust. You can opt out of these or change your preferences at any time by phoning 0207 837 0006 or visiting us at: www.dogstrust.org.uk/keepintouch. For more information on how we handle your personal information, please see the Privacy Policy set out on our website here: www.dogstrust.org.uk/privacy.

9. Contact Details

The **Dogs Trust VSF Team** can be contacted as follows:

Telephone: 0300 303 2552 - Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm
Email: VSF@dogstrust.org.uk
Online query form: <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/VSF/contact/>

In order to better manage the queries that we receive, we ask that when you have a new query you please submit a query form. This will issue you with a receipt number and place your query in our queue. Queries can be submitted online by you or your Veterinary Practice.